

## Alternatives to Disposal

***Buy Only The Paint You Need*** -- First, always buy only what you need. That way, you reduce the chance of having any paint leftover in the first place. When you avoid creating waste at the start, you're practicing "source reduction." It's a smart way to help the environment!

***Store Paint So it Lasts for Years*** - Did you know that when properly stored, paint can last for years? Just cover the opening with plastic wrap, and make sure the lid fits securely so the paint doesn't leak. Then, and here's the key step: store the paint can upside down. The paint will create a tight seal around the lid, keeping the paint fresh until you need it again.

***Use Up All Your Paint*** - Leftover paint can be used on touch up jobs and smaller projects. You can also blend and mix smaller quantities of similar colors of latex paint to use as a primer on larger jobs, or jobs where the final finish is not critical.

***Recycle the Empty Paint Can*** - Once you've used up your paint, recycle the empty steel paint cans. In some areas, plastic paint pails and containers may also be recyclable, so be sure to check the requirements for your community.

***Donate or Exchange Your Paint*** - If you just can't use your leftover paint, donate it to community groups, theater groups, schools, churches and others who need or want it.

**Erie County Department of Environment and Planning**



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**Erie County  
Department of  
Environment and  
Planning**



**What to do  
with  
Latex  
Paint!**

## Proper Disposal of Latex Paint

Unwanted latex paint is not a hazardous waste. Latex paints can be distinguished from oil-based paints by reading the label. Latex paint has water as an ingredient and cleans up with soap and water. Oil-based paints contain petroleum distillates and uses paint thinner for cleanup.

*How do you tell if it's latex paint if the label is gone?*

Placing a small amount in a jar or cap mixed with water will show whether it is latex or solvent based paint. Latex paint readily mixes with water since it is water based—it becomes thinner as water is added. Solvent based paint is insoluble in water—the paint separate like oil and water!



### Latex Paint Disposal

Latex paint and stain can be safely disposed of in the trash once it is in hardened form. To get it in hardened form, just follow the instructions below:

- ⇒ Remove and discard the paint lid.
- ⇒ Allow the paint to dry in a ventilated area. Peel the paint from inside of the can and place the dried paint in a plastic bag. Then place the dried paint in your trash and the paint can in your recycle bin. **OR**
- ⇒ Add a clay-based kitty litter to the paint can. Stir the mixture together and allow it to harden. Once hardened, place in the trash.

Remember this is only for latex paint. Oil based paints must be properly disposed of at an **Erie County Household Hazardous Waste** collection.

For more information about this program:

Call **858-6800**

or visit

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